

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS HO CHI MINH CITY 001123

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [KIRF](#) [VM](#) [HUMANR](#) [ETMIN](#) [RELFREE](#)

SUBJECT: PASTOR REPORTED DETAINED ON CAMBODIAN BORDER

1. (SBU) Embassy and Congen have received reports over the last few days that Pastor Tran Mai was detained on August 29 while attempting to enter Vietnam from Cambodia in the border town of Chau Doc, An Giang province. Pastor Mai is a leader of the Inter-Evangelistic Movement in Ho Chi Minh City, an unrecognized Protestant denomination associated with the (also unrecognized) Vietnam Evangelical Fellowship.

2. (SBU) According to these reports, Pastor Mai was returning from a trip to the United States. The Pastor, and a number of his colleagues, are reported to regularly use the Cambodian border rather than Tan Son Nhat International Airport when departing or returning to Vietnam. (It is unclear to us what procedures or travel documents are used for this border crossing. HCMC issued Mai a visa in his Vietnamese passport this spring. However, we understand that this trip is sometimes made with a border crossing card that is intended for one day travel within the border region.)

3. (SBU) Mrs. Truong Thi Lieu (protect), Pastor Mai's wife, informed Embassy Hanoi Poloff that HCMC police had told her that Mai would be freed "soon," and that Chau Doc police had told her Mai would be released after they "cleared up some issues." She said she knew of no specific reason why he should be detained at this time, and said he was not carrying religious tracts or other illegal items. Mrs. Lieu speculated that the police were concerned about his international travels, and added that she had heard authorities viewed Mai with concern as a result of his prominent role in the Vietnam Evangelical Fellowship.

WINNICK